

**Sustainable Development
and World Heritage Site Management
in Switzerland:
Perceptions and Priorities**

IMPRESSUM

Editor

Swiss Academies of Arts and Sciences
House of Academies | Laupenstrasse 7 | P.O. Box | 3001 Bern | Switzerland

A project of the Swiss Academy of Sciences (SCNAT)

Swiss Park Research, Forum Landscape, Alps, Parks
+41 31 306 93 47 | parkforschung@scnat.ch | www.parkforschung.ch

Author

Peter Bille Larsen, Environmental Governance and Territorial Development Hub/Institute
University of Geneva, peter.larsen@unige.ch

Reviewers

Jeanne Berthoud, Swiss Commission for UNESCO
Carlo Ossola, Federal Office for the Environment FOEN

Coordination

Astrid Wallner, Swiss Park Research

Editing

Tina Hirschbuehl, CDE, University of Bern

Layout

Olivia Zwygart

Photo Coverpage:

Lavaux, UNESCO World Heritage © Switzerland Tourism – BAFU, Marcus Gyger

1st Edition, 2019

This brochure can be obtained from the Forum Landscape, Alps, Parks (SCNAT) free of charge
or downloaded from swiss-academies.ch/communications
© Swiss Academies of Arts and Sciences, 2019

Recommended form of citation:

Larsen Peter B (2019) Sustainable Development and World Heritage Site Management
in Switzerland: Perceptions and Priorities.
Swiss Academies Communications 14 (4).

ISSN (print): 2297-8275

ISSN (online): 2297-184X

DOI: 10.5281/zenodo.1494842

**Sustainable Development
and World Heritage Site Management
in Switzerland:
Perceptions and Priorities**

The UN's International Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

With this publication, the Swiss Academies of Arts and Sciences advance Sustainable Development Goal 17: «Strengthen the means of implementation and revitalize the global partnership for sustainable development.»

WITH THE SDGS, THE UN STRIVES FOR DEVELOPMENT THAT IS ECONOMICALLY, SOCIALLY, AND ENVIRONMENTALLY SUSTAINABLE. UNITED NATIONS LEADERS ADOPTED THE 17 SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS IN 2015. THESE NEW GOALS ARE TO BE IMPLEMENTED BY ALL UN MEMBER STATES BY 2030, WITH THE AIM OF ENSURING SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT ON A GLOBAL SCALE.

> sustainabledevelopment.un.org

> eda.admin.ch/agenda2030/de/home/agenda-2030/die-17-ziele-fuer-eine-nachhaltige-entwicklung.html



Table of Contents

Executive summary	7
Zusammenfassung	9
Résumé	11
Introduction.....	13
Methodology	14
Results	
1. Perceptions of sustainability issues and challenges	14
2. Conditions and experiences with action and cooperation	24
3. Taking the discussion forward: Neuchâtel conference proceedings	30
Concluding remarks	32
Annexes	34
References	35



Photo 1: Circular viaduct of Rhaetian Railway near Brusio © Christof Sonderegger

Executive summary

There are twelve UNESCO World Heritage sites in Switzerland: nine cultural and three natural. Amid global challenges such as climate change and growing tourist numbers, what issues do these sites face in terms of sustainable development? Since the adoption of a global policy on World Heritage and Sustainable Development in 2015, reflecting on this question has become increasingly important in terms of framing national responses.

This report summarizes the key findings of a rapid survey on the main concerns and issues identified by site managers and other stakeholders in the Swiss context. The first section explores the perceptions of sustainability issues and challenges. The second examines experiences with and conditions for sustainable development action in the Swiss World Heritage context.

According to our survey, there is no question about whether sustainable development is relevant or not: 85% of the respondents considered it “very important”. Instead, it appears rather to be a question of how, to what extent, and under what conditions linkages between sustainable *development* and World Heritage are made. Our interviews reveal the centrality of development concerns in everyday management. These concerns are many and varied and include taking decisions on infrastructure development and construction. There is also a general perception that *sustainability* concerns beyond the Outstanding Universal Value (OUV) do matter: The interviews show a strong commitment from site managers to take up a range of concerns from all three dimensions of sustainable development.

With regards to the **social dimension**, we found a considerable diversity of ways in which site management engages with local communities. Half of the respondents pointed to challenges of engaging with local values and practices. A key question involves how to sustain the values, cultural practices, and livelihoods that are critical for the landscape values found in World Heritage sites like Jungfrau-Aletsch and Lavaux.

Some 60% of respondents also stressed the challenge of resolving conflicts between heritage and **economic development**. This ranges from infrastructure development and tourism to local economies that are rapidly changing. Another common tension involved how to strike the balance between valorizing heritage and reconciling this with wider commercial values. This was not least significant in the growing pressure to promote or develop tourism, prompting questions about how to maintain core values and ensure carrying capacity.

In terms of the **environmental dimension**, more than half of the respondents stressed the issue of sustainable visitor and tourism management, roughly a third noted the challenges of mitigating environmental impacts of investments, and another third emphasized the integration with wider environmental management. Interestingly, roughly half of the respondents stressed sustainable landscape and ecosystem management as critical.

In response to such challenges, much sustainability action is already taking place in World Heritage sites in Switzerland – from environmental education and interactive exhibitions to site-based research and sophisticated monitoring programmes. In some cases, sustainability can be acted upon; in others, site managers face real constraints. These include global sustainability challenges (e.g. climate change), but also specific institutional aspects. Many site managers see room for improvement in terms of policy, legal, and financial conditions for the effective introduction of sustainability as well as good opportunities in the context of revising management plans. Roughly half the respondents also consider that more could be done to recognize World Heritage in wider sustainability plans.

Under the Swiss model, two authorities are responsible for World Heritage at the national level. In addition, diverse cantonal and communal arrangements engage with sustainable development concerns. Actual management of World Heritage sites is often embedded within and relies on other institutional bodies, regulatory measures, and planning instruments rather than instruments driven by World Heritage management itself. In some cases, for example, critical World Heritage values may at times be “overlooked” by wider development decision-making. This raises questions about the solidity, and ultimately the sustainability, of current World Heritage management systems and approaches. Such governance complexity underscores the relevance of a more structured reflection about how World Heritage plans can take on board sustainability issues and conversely, how communal, cantonal, and federal sustainable development plans can consider World Heritage issues.

Whereas the Outstanding Universal Values of Swiss World Heritage sites, as recognized by UNESCO, are generally the focus of site management, there are often multiple entry points to address other sustainability concerns. The Swiss World Heritage Action Plan is a good example of a national synthesis emphasizing the need for creation or updating of management tools such as management plans and buffer-zone establishment. The national framework is complemented by a wide range of communal and cantonal sustainability efforts. Still, current initiatives are



Photo 2: Prehistoric pile dwellings Wauwilermoos © Bruno Tanner

often site-based and fragmented without a strong legal basis, rather than a systematic effort to render world heritage management and sustainable development compatible.

Today, there is good potential to strengthen the integration of sustainable development concerns in World Heritage sites in Switzerland. At a science policy meeting held in Neuchâtel in June 2018, national stakeholders confirm the relevance of the topic and the centrality of the sustainability challenges to everyday management. Much can be achieved by raising these concerns and pooling efforts to address them through a common implementation framework.

Furthermore, Switzerland is a key player in the field of international World Heritage cooperation. Sustainable development features highly in these discussions, and it would be interesting to explore how this could be linked with a concerted national effort to boost heritage capacity on sustainable development.

Important strategic questions now are whether and how to strengthen references to, and collective action on, sustainability concerns; how to stimulate further site-based action; and how to inform national policy discussions.

It is our hope that our survey results and the dialogue initiated in Neuchâtel can contribute to this effort.

Zusammenfassung

In der Schweiz existieren zwölf UNESCO Welterbestätten: neun Kulturerbe und drei Naturerbe. Auf welche Themen im Bereich der nachhaltigen Entwicklung stösst man in Welterbestätten in der Schweiz? Diese Frage ist seit der in 2015 eingeführten globalen Richtlinien, was Welterbe und nachhaltige Entwicklung angeht, besonders relevant, da sie dazu anregt, Reaktionen auf diese auf lokalem Level zu gestalten und zu reflektieren.

Dieser Bericht fasst die zentralen Ergebnisse einer Umfrage zusammen, die die Hauptanliegen der Site Manager und anderer Interessensgruppen im Kontext der Schweiz festhält. Der erste Teil beschäftigt sich mit den verschiedenen Perspektiven hinsichtlich der Herausforderungen und Problematiken, die durch Nachhaltigkeitsfragen aufkommen, während der zweite Teil Erfahrungen mit nachhaltiger Entwicklung in Welterbestätten in der Schweiz und Bedingungen für eine solche Praxis dokumentiert.

Das Nachhaltigkeitskonzept wird in der Regel in einem lokalen Kontext umgesetzt, wobei 85% der Umfrageteilnehmer dieses als sehr wichtig einstufen. Fallstudien haben gezeigt, dass *Entwicklungsfragen* in alltäglichen Managementspraktiken eine grosse Rolle spielen, was beispielsweise durch die Entwicklung der Infrastruktur und anderer Bauvorhaben zum Ausdruck kommt. Darüber hinaus offenbaren Interviews ein grosses Engagement seitens der Site Manager eine Bandbreite verschiedener *Nachhaltigkeitsprojekte* durchzuführen, die sozialer, ökologischer und wirtschaftlicher Natur sind.

Hinsichtlich der **sozialen Dimension** legen die Ergebnisse offen, dass Site Manager die Lokalbevölkerung durch verschiedene Projekte integriert. Die Hälfte der Befragten wies darauf hin, dass die Auseinandersetzung mit lokalen Werten und Praktiken eine Herausforderung darstellen kann. Eine bedeutende soziale Dimension ist ausserdem die Aufrechterhaltung von Werten, kulturellen Praktiken und Lebensgrundlagen, die in Landschaften wie Jungfrau-Aletsch und Lavaux essentiell sind.

60% der Befragten betonte, dass Konflikte oft durch den Wunsch entstanden, Kulturerbe zu schützen, aber gleichzeitig die **wirtschaftliche Entwicklung** voranzutreiben. Die Entwicklung der Infrastruktur, Tourismus und die sich wandelnde lokale Wirtschaft führen weiterhin zu Fragen hinsichtlich Nachhaltigkeit. Ein weiterer Spannungspunkt betrifft die Frage, wie ein Gleichgewicht zwischen dem Wert von Welterbe an sich und dem allgemeinen «Marktwert» der Stätte hergestellt werden soll. Dies ist besonders signifikant, wenn es um den wachsenden Druck der Tourismusförderung geht. Hier stellt sich die Frage,

wie Schlüsselwerte aufrechterhalten und Tragfähigkeit sichergestellt werden soll.

Hinsichtlich der **ökologischen Dimension** legte die Hälfte der Befragten grosses Gewicht auf das Thema des nachhaltigen Besucher- und Touristenmanagements. Ungefähr ein Drittel der Befragten erwähnte Herausforderungen bezüglich der Abmilderung ökologischer Auswirkungen aufgrund von Investments und ein weiteres Drittel stellte das Thema der Integration der Welterbestätte in ein breiteres Umweltmanagementsystem in den Vordergrund. Ungefähr die Hälfte der Befragten erachtete die nachhaltige Bewirtschaftung der Landschaft und des Ökosystems als sehr wichtig.

Als Reaktion auf solche Herausforderungen finden Nachhaltigkeitsmassnahmen in Form von Bildungsprogrammen, interaktiven Ausstellungen, standortbezogenen Forschungen und anspruchsvollen Kontrollverfahren in den Welterbestätten der Schweiz statt. Einige Standorte sind jedoch eingeschränkt, wenn es um Nachhaltigkeitsmassnahmen geht – nicht nur im Fall globaler Problematiken, wie beispielsweise dem Klimawandel – sondern auch durch spezifische institutionelle Aspekte. Viele Site Manager sehen Möglichkeiten zur Verbesserung sowohl in Bezug auf Richtlinien als auch im Hinblick auf die rechtlichen und finanziellen Bedingungen für die effektive Umsetzung von Nachhaltigkeitsprogrammen. In diesem Rahmen wäre es auch eine gute Gelegenheit, Managementpläne überarbeiten zu können. Die Hälfte der Befragten gab ebenfalls an, dass Welterbestätten in grossflächigen Nachhaltigkeitsprogrammen bedacht werden sollten.

Das Schweizer Modell, in dem zwei Behörden für Welterbe auf nationaler Ebene mit diversen kantonalen und kommunalen Abkommen verantwortlich sind, führt zu unterschiedlichen Bedingungen für die Auseinandersetzung mit nachhaltiger Entwicklung. Das eigentliche Management der Welterbestätten wird oft von anderen institutionellen Gremien, Regulierungsmassnahmen und Planungsinstrumenten ausgeführt, als von dem Management von World Heritage selber. In einigen Fällen werden essentielle Welterbe-Werte im Rahmen breiterer Entwicklungsentscheidungen nicht beachtet. Dies führt auch zu relevanten Fragen bezüglich der Stabilität und letztendlich der Nachhaltigkeit der gegenwärtigen World Heritage Managementsysteme und deren Ansätze. Diese Komplexität der Governance weist darauf hin, dass eine strukturierte Reflexion von Nöten ist, die diskutiert wie World Heritage Managementpläne Nachhaltigkeitsaspekte berücksichtigen können und wie, entgegengesetzt, kommu-



Photo 3: Benedictine Convent of St. John in Müstair © Stiftung Pro Kloster St. Johann in Müstair

nale, kantonale und föderale Nachhaltigkeitsprogramme Welterbestätte einbeziehen können.

Obwohl die *außergewöhnlichen universellen Werte*, welche von UNESCO anerkannt werden, ein Schwerpunkt im Rahmen des Site Managements sind, gibt es oft vielfältige Kanäle durch welche Nachhaltigkeitsthemen thematisiert werden können. Der UNESCO Welterbe Aktionsplan Schweiz 2016–2023 ist ein gutes Beispiel für eine nationale Synthese, die den Bedarf für eine Erstellung oder eine Überarbeitung der Management tools, wie Managementpläne und die Einrichtung einer Pufferzone, betont. Das nationale Gefüge wird durch eine Bandbreite an kommunalen und kantonalen Nachhaltigkeitsmassnahmen ergänzt. Trotzdem sind gegenwärtige Initiativen oft standortbezogen und fragmentiert, sowie ohne eine starke rechtliche Grundlage, als dass sie einen systematischen Versuch darstellen World Heritage Management und nachhaltige Entwicklung kompatibel zu machen.

Es gibt gutes Potenzial für die Integration von Nachhaltigkeitsmassnahmen in das Management der Welterbestätten in der Schweiz. Nationale Interessensgruppen bestätigen die Relevanz des Themas und betonen die Herausforde-

rungen, welchen sie aufgrund von Nachhaltigkeitsfragen in der alltäglichen Geschäftsführung begegnen. Es kann vieles durch Aufklärung und die Bündelung von Ressourcen erreicht werden, um einen allgemein gültigen Durchführungsrahmen zu schaffen. Zudem ist die Schweiz eine Schlüsselfigur in einem internationalen Gebiet. Nachhaltige Entwicklung ist in diesen Diskussionen sehr relevant und nationale Bemühungen, um die Kapazität von Welterbe und Nachhaltigkeit zu fördern, wären lohnenswert.

Wichtige strategische Fragen, die sich in diesem Zusammenhang stellen, sind, wie Empfehlungen und kollektive Unternehmungen in Bezug auf Nachhaltigkeit unterstützt und gefördert und weitere Site basierte Massnahmen stimuliert werden können, so dass sie nationale Policy Diskussionen effektiv informieren.

Wir hoffen, dass dieser Bericht und der in Neuchâtel initiierte Dialog dazu beitragen können.

Résumé

La Suisse compte douze biens inscrits sur la liste du patrimoine mondial de l'humanité: neuf biens culturels, trois biens naturels. Quels sont les enjeux de développement durable pour les biens du patrimoine mondial en Suisse? Depuis l'adoption de la Politique pour l'intégration d'une perspective de développement durable dans les processus de la Convention du patrimoine mondial en 2015, la question est devenue de plus en plus importante et nécessite une réflexion et une formulation de mesures à prendre au niveau national.

Ce rapport présente les principales conclusions d'un sondage rapide visant à examiner les enjeux principaux identifiés par les gestionnaires de sites et d'autres parties prenantes dans le contexte suisse. La première section examine les résultats de la recherche en termes de perception des problèmes et des défis dans le contexte de la durabilité. La deuxième section examine les expériences liées au développement durable et les modalités d'action dans ce domaine.

Le concept de durabilité est souvent interprété dans un contexte local, mais 85% des personnes interrogées l'ont néanmoins jugé « très important ». D'une part, les études de cas révèlent l'importance centrale des préoccupations liées à des questions de *développement* en général dans la gestion au quotidien. Cela va de la prise de décisions sur le développement de l'infrastructure et la construction à une série d'autres enjeux. D'autre part, les entretiens révèlent également un sens de l'engagement de la part des gestionnaires de sites pour prendre en compte une série d'autres questions de durabilité sociale, environnementales et économiques.

En ce qui concerne la **dimension sociale**, les résultats révèlent une diversité considérable d'approches utilisées par l'organe de gestion du bien pour interagir avec les communautés locales. La moitié des répondants ont souligné le défi représenté par la prise en compte des valeurs et des pratiques locales. Une dimension sociale critique est effectivement le maintien des valeurs, des pratiques culturelles et des moyens d'existence au niveau local, lesquels sont d'une grande importance pour les valeurs paysagères dans des sites comme le Jungfrau-Aletsch et le Lavaux.

60% des répondants ont également souligné le défi que représente la résolution de conflits entre les intérêts du patrimoine et ceux du **développement économique**. Le défi de la durabilité économique est important car il s'étend du développement des infrastructures et du tourisme à l'évolution des économies locales. Une autre tension concerne l'équilibre entre la valorisation du patrimoine en soi et sa valeur commerciale directe. Cela a été particulièrement

important dans la pression croissante exercée en faveur de la promotion et du développement du tourisme, suscitant des questions sur la façon de maintenir les valeurs centrales liées au patrimoine tout en renforçant le tourisme.

En ce qui concerne la **dimension environnementale**, plus de la moitié des répondants ont souligné la question de la gestion durable des visiteurs et du tourisme; environ un tiers a noté les défis en termes de diminution des impacts environnementaux liés aux investissements et un autre tiers a souligné le défi de l'intégration du patrimoine dans la gestion plus générale de l'environnement. Environ la moitié des répondants ont souligné que l'importance de la gestion durable des paysages et des écosystèmes était essentielle.

En réponse à de tels défis, de nombreuses mesures liées à la durabilité sont déjà en mises en place dans les sites du patrimoine mondial en Suisse. Elles vont de l'éducation environnementale et des expositions interactives à la recherche et aux programmes de monitoring sophistiqués. Certains enjeux de durabilité peuvent être abordés directement au niveau du bien, tandis que pour d'autres, les gestionnaires de sites font face à de réelles contraintes. Ceux-ci incluent des défis mondiaux de durabilité hors de portée (comme le changement climatique), mais aussi des aspects institutionnels spécifiques.

De nombreux gestionnaires de sites voient des possibilités d'amélioration de la situation au niveau des bases juridiques, des conditions légales et financières pour l'introduction efficace de la durabilité dans le système. De l'autre côté, la révision des plans de gestion relatifs aux biens du patrimoine mondial en Suisse présente une fenêtre concrète pour l'intégration de la durabilité. Dans une autre perspective, environ la moitié des personnes interrogées considèrent également que l'on pourrait faire davantage pour reconnaître le patrimoine mondial dans des plans de durabilité établis par les communes, les cantons, ainsi qu'au niveau fédéral.

Le modèle suisse qui repose sur deux autorités responsables pour les biens du patrimoine mondial au niveau national et sur une grande diversité des dispositifs cantonaux et communaux font qu'il existe une diversité importante de conditions pour aborder les questions de développement durable. La gestion effective des sites du patrimoine mondial est souvent intégrée et dépend d'autres organes institutionnels, de mesures réglementaires et d'instruments de planification sectoriels plutôt que d'instruments spécifiques dédiés au patrimoine mondial. Dans certains cas, par exemple, les valeurs du patrimoine mondial peuvent parfois être « négligées » par une prise de décision plus large en matière de développement.



Photo 4: La Chaux-de-Fonds view from Espacit Tower © Guillaume Perret

Cela pose également des questions critiques sur la solidité et, par conséquent, la durabilité des systèmes et approches de gestion du patrimoine mondial actuels. Une telle complexité de gouvernance montre la pertinence d'une réflexion plus structurée sur la manière dont les plans de gestion du patrimoine mondial peuvent prendre en compte les questions de durabilité et vice versa: de quelle manière les plans de développement durable communaux, cantonaux et fédéraux peuvent-ils intégrer les questions du patrimoine mondial.

Alors que les valeurs universelles exceptionnelles, reconnues par l'UNESCO, sont généralement au centre de la gestion du site, il existe souvent de multiples possibilités d'aborder d'autres problèmes de durabilité. Le plan d'action de la Suisse pour le patrimoine mondial est un bon exemple de synthèse nationale soulignant la nécessité de créer ou de mettre à jour des outils de gestion tels que les plans de gestion et l'établissement de zones tampons. Le cadre national est complété par un large éventail d'efforts de durabilité communaux et cantonaux. Pourtant, certaines initiatives de durabilité actuelles ont une portée limitée à des biens individuels. Ces actions sont fragmentées sans un fondement juridique assez solide pour garantir un effort systématique permettant de rendre la gestion du patrimoine mondial et le développement durable compatibles.

Il existe aujourd'hui un bon potentiel pour renforcer l'intégration des préoccupations de développement durable

s'agissant des biens du patrimoine mondial en Suisse. Les participants à une réunion de représentants de la science et de la politique en juin 2018 à Neuchâtel ont confirmé la pertinence du sujet et l'importance des défis que représentent les questions de durabilité dans la pratique quotidienne. Une réponse ciblée à ces défis et des efforts concertés pour les relever au moyen d'un cadre commun de mise en œuvre devraient faire une différence.

De plus, la Suisse est fortement engagée dans la coopération internationale pour la préservation du patrimoine mondial, et le développement durable est une priorité absolue. Il serait intéressant d'étudier dans quelle mesure cette activité pourrait être liée aux efforts nationaux visant à renforcer les capacités de durabilité dans la gestion du patrimoine mondial.

Dans l'ensemble, les résultats du sondage soulèvent d'importantes questions stratégiques. Faut-il soutenir la discussion sur les questions de durabilité et les efforts conjoints pour les aborder et, dans l'affirmative, de quelle manière? Comment peut-on promouvoir d'autres mesures de durabilité dans les différents sites? Et comment les idées et les expériences peuvent-elles être efficacement introduites dans le débat politique national?

Nous espérons que ce rapport et le dialogue initié à Neuchâtel pourront contribuer à cet effort.

Introduction

This report is an attempt to engage on the topic of sustainable development as it is perceived in World Heritage sites in Switzerland.

It is not a sustainability audit, a process which requires a more in-depth assessment. Rather, the report is exploratory: it seeks to identify sustainability issues and challenges as seen by key stakeholders, and to draw lessons from actions taken at specific sites. Finally, it also attempts to point out priorities for the future.

Sustainable development matters are of concern well beyond the global South. Not only is this in the spirit of the Sustainable Development Goals – it also became clear in discussions with members of the Swiss UNESCO Commission, which is housed at the Federal Department of Foreign Affairs. Sustainable development matters also merit attention in the North, but what this means and how to generate a debate across the different sites in countries such as Switzerland remains a real question.

Further conversations prompted the Swiss UNESCO Commission and the Swiss Ethnological Society to organize a discussion on the topic with the support of the Swiss Academy of Humanities and Social Sciences. The result was the conference in Neuchâtel on 4 June 2018 entitled “Quelles perspectives pour la durabilité dans les sites inscrits au patrimoine mondial en Suisse?” (What

are the sustainability perspectives in World Heritage sites in Switzerland?)¹.

We are grateful for the financial and organizational support provided by the Swiss UNESCO Commission to enable this exploratory research to take place. Nicolas Mathieu and Jeanne Berthoud provided invaluable support and several Commission members, including Daniel Gutscher and Pierre Galland, took active part in meeting arrangements. Special thanks go to Carlo Ossola of the Commission for his support and readiness to engage in this little, but not insignificant, partnership activity. Support and useful comments were also kindly provided by Astrid Wallner of Swiss Park Research. Finally, we are grateful to Swiss site managers and other stakeholders who took the time to respond to the survey, give interviews, and attend discussions.

The paper is divided into three parts. The first section explores the perceptions of sustainability issues and challenges as identified in the survey. The second examines experiences with and conditions for sustainable development action in the Swiss World Heritage context. The third section summarizes some of the key findings from the meeting in June 2018. Finally, a set of brief conclusions are outlined with the hope of stimulating further individual and collective discussions.

¹ The results of the meeting are summarized later in this report.



Photo 5 : The Great Aletsch Glacier © Raphael Schmid

Methodology

Rather than choosing one definition of sustainable development, this paper builds on the assumption that different actors think and use the concept differently. Our interest is therefore to explore, rather than to assume from the start, what the sustainable development or sustainability issues are in different sites. The concepts are used interchangeably in this report. We wanted to generate a rough big picture and snapshot that would stimulate – rather than terminate – the debate across different sites. This approach led to an emphasis on qualitative methods.

The exercise was conceived as a rapid assessment with a small online survey reaching out to national stakeholders, combined with semi-structured interviews with selected site managers and other local stakeholders. The survey and interviews covered social, environmental, and economic topics.

In practice, we had to limit interviews to five sites due to time, logistical, resource, and organizational constraints². The sites selected were Swiss Alps Jungfrau-Aletsch; Swiss Tectonic Arena Sardona; Three Castles, Defensive Wall and Ramparts of the Market-Town of Bellinzona; the Old City of Berne; and Lavaux, Vineyard Terraces. Two research assistants from the University of Lucerne, Andrea Frei and Anina Koch, helped to set up the online survey (conducted in three national languages, German, French, and Italian), and to collect secondary literature and transcribe interviews. The trilingual online survey involved a mix of single- or multiple-answer questions and additional opportunities for more elaborate answers. The anonymous survey was made available from 11 to 15 December 2017. The response rate was 44%, with answers from 45 of the 96 potential respondents who had been invited by e-mail. Slightly more than half of the respondents were from the German-speaking part, a third from the French-speaking part, and the remainder from the Italian-speaking area. Half of the respondents were from cantonal authorities, and a quarter were site managers. Remaining respondents included representatives from local communities, federal institutions, private businesses, civil society, and research institutions addressing a wide range of Swiss World Heritage sites.

It is clear from the diversity of sites that sustainability issues are likely to differ widely in terms of geographical location, size, and nature of values and attributes. Yet, it is also interesting to note that a number of issues and concerns are shared. This interplay between similarities and differences will be unpacked further below.

Table 1: Survey results on the question “With which of the following site(s) are our currently involved with or living in?”. Multiple answers were possible.

	number of responses	percentage
Swiss Tectonic Arena Sardona	6	14.63
Abbey of St. Gall	5	12.2
Old City of Bern	6	14.63
Benedictine Convent of St. John Müstair	5	12.2
Castles, defensive wall and ramparts of Bellinzona	2	4.88
Lavaux, vineyard terraces	7	17.07
The Rhaetian Railway in the Albula/Bernina Landscapes	2	4.88
La Chaux-de-Fonds/Le Locle	3	7.32
Prehistoric pile dwellings around the Alps	12	29.27
The Architectural Work of Le Corbusier	2	4.88
Swiss Alps Jungfrau-Aletsch	4	9.76
Monte San Giorgio	7	17.07
All UNESCO World Heritage Sites in Switzerland	5	12.2
None of the listed	3	7.32
N = 45 n = 41 missing = 4		

² This included a request to coordinate and avoid overlap with the research conducted in the context of the Vinci research project on the SDGs. www.forschdb2.unibas.ch/inf2/rm_projects/object_view.php?r=3700502&type=5

Results

1. Perceptions of sustainability issues and challenges

Sustainable development matters in World Heritage!

In November 2015, the General Assembly of the State Parties to the World Heritage Convention adopted a new policy on sustainable development³. What and how this matters for specific World Heritage sites is now being explored in different countries. In Germany, for example, the National UNESCO Commission has developed guidelines for the integration of a sustainability perspective in World Heritage sites⁴. In Switzerland, the debate is also taking place in different settings, from specific dialogues on sustainable tourism to legislative initiatives for sustainable development in the three natural World Heritage sites. The national 2016-2019 sustainable development strategy does raise heritage, but mainly emphasizes the cultural side and built heritage (Conseil fédéral suisse, 2016). The Swiss World Heritage charter (“Charte suisse du Patrimoine mondial”) drawn up through a consultative process and adopted in November 2014, clearly expresses support for sustainable development as one of the core principles to which more than 180 actors have signed up. The charter confirms the aim of reconciling “economic efficiency, environmental responsibility and social solidarity with the full and integral protection of the Outstanding Universal Value of the World Heritage properties. Through this responsible approach, and the added value it results in, we shall guarantee a sustainable future of our World Heritage properties” (UNESCO CH, 2014). Yet, what sustainable development means as a whole – on the ground – for the nine cultural and three natural sites making up the World Heritage list in Switzerland remains an open question. Our findings suggest that the concept is often interpreted in the local context.

“Sustainability is the valorization of landscape, like for example pasture valorization, or to *renaturate*. Another aspect is sustainable tourism. We can construct new infrastructure, if necessary, but it is more important is to conserve what we already have and to construct in a way that does not devalue the unique landscape we have.” (Jungfrau-Aletsch site manager, personal interview, 2017)

Most (85%) of the survey respondents considered sustainable development “very important”, with the remainder calling it “reasonably important”. There is thus no question about whether sustainable development is relevant or not; instead, it appears rather to be a question of how, to what extent, and under what conditions linkages between sustainable development and World Heritage are made. But what does this mean in practice? Our brief interviews with site managers and others reveal the centrality of *development* concerns in everyday management. These ranged from taking decisions on infrastructure development and construction to a range of other locally-defined concerns explored in further detail below. There is also a generally held perception that *sustainability* concerns beyond the Outstanding Universal Value (OUV) do matter.

“The primary management issue, according to the Committee decision, is to allow the natural processes of slope erosion to continue. This is my job”, he noted smilingly, but also stressed the importance of exploring how “sustainability could be implemented in all the work of the management.” (Sardona site manager, personal interview, 2017)

Are World Heritage management and sustainable development compatible?

Two-thirds of the respondents considered World Heritage management and sustainable development to be compatible, while the remaining respondents only partially agreed. This indicates some potential tension between development and heritage conservation, which we explored further by asking respondents to identify different social, environmental, and economic challenges. It is also safe to assume that people operate with different concepts of heritage, sustainability, and development, which shape whether they are considered compatible or not. We have sought to conceptualize such differences through the following categories (Larsen and Logan, 2018):

- sustainable heritage
- heritage vs. sustainable development
- sustainable development for heritage
- heritage for sustainable development

Whereas sustainability for one site manager may be about “transmitting values from one generation to another”, sustainable development for another may present an immediate infrastructure challenge. In Jungfrau-Aletsch, the en-

³ Its full title is “Policy on the Integration of a Sustainable Development Perspective into the Processes of the World Heritage Convention”.

⁴ www.unesco.de/fileadmin/medien/Dokumente/Welterbe/Neue_Webseite/Richtlinienpapier_Welterbe_und_Nachhaltige_Entwicklung.pdf

ergy industry (e.g. hydropower) is presented as having an “important and stimulating role regarding economy and ecology in the World Heritage Region”, yet there is also an “enormous tension between nature protection and resource use”⁵. Compatibility means something very different in the two cases. This suggests there would be value in joining forces in the small World Heritage community in Switzerland to create a common language and focus.

Sustaining heritage over time: a priority among many

Unsurprisingly, the sustainability priority of many site managers relates to how the Outstanding Universal Values and the associated attributes are sustained over time and generations. But even this may mean different things. In Lavaux, for example, the future and viability of wine production appeared to be a precondition to maintaining the landscape. This was a central concern for both site manager and winemakers.

“To sustain the landscape, we need to sustain the wine sale. If we can’t sell it ...” (Wine-maker Lavaux, personal interview, 2017)

At the same time, the site had experienced longstanding political pressure to put more emphasis on tourism promotion. In Jungfrau-Aletsch, questions were also raised about youth, generational shifts, and the sustainability of farmed landscapes integral to the property. Sustaining heritage in such cases raise a complex set of nested and inter-related dimensions.

Challenging social issues: Consultation, participation, and building local awareness

Among the diverse sets of challenges identified by the respondents, the **social dimension appears** significant in a number of ways.

An overwhelming majority considered it a challenge to “build local awareness about the value of World Heritage”, and 70% considered it a challenge to “ensure consultation and participation of local communities” (see table 2). Just under half the participants noted protecting local cultural values and heritage as a social challenge. Multiple answers were possible.

Table 2: Survey results on the question “What do you consider to be the most challenging social issues in your World Heritage site and its bufferzone?”. Multiple answers were possible.

	number of responses	percentage
Creating local employment	8	20
Ensuring consultation and participation of local communities	28	70
Protecting local cultural values and heritage	19	47.50
Ensuring equitable benefit-sharing	5	12.50
Building local awareness about the value of World Heritage	35	87.50
Other	4	10.00
N = 45 n = 40 missing = 5		

The nature of these social challenges became clearer through the interviews, which reflected the highly diverse site contexts and issues. Site managers, for example, may have more or less explicit or systematic interaction with other stakeholders. In some cases, roles are formal, yet in many cases relationships also rely on informal networks and relationships built over time. This may involve engagement with local structures (e.g. the *Altstadtleiste* in Bern) or local committee members and representatives (e.g. as in Sardona or Lavaux). Whereas some sites have formal participatory mechanisms with local representatives meeting site management on a regular basis, others, such as Bern, do not have specific World Heritage-related mechanisms *per se*.

“No (we don’t have a formal Committee), but there is easy access. I just need to make a telephone call and I know where people work, sometimes we meet in the old town, there are many small arrangements, discussions, and more.” (Bern site manager, personal interview, 2017)

Another interesting dynamic is the common emphasis on the role of World Heritage as sites of education and awareness (Photo 6). This ranges from education to raising awareness about Alpine environmental concerns in Jungfrau-Aletsch, to teaching labs on archeology in Bellinzona.

⁵ www.jungfrau-aletsch.ch/en/development/ (accessed 22.8.18).



Photo 6: Environmental education in the field © UNESCO World Heritage Jungfrau-Aletsch

Such efforts demonstrate the potential of World Heritage site management to engage with broader themes of society, education, and sustainability, drawing upon their specific natural or cultural values. The finding is emphasized here, as the interviews revealed a very dynamic educational space in high demand from the early years of primary school to further adult education programmes.

Diversity and evolution of community engagements

First, it was clear that social contexts differed not just among different sites, but also within a given site area. Second, while local communities in many countries are beneficiaries or “victims” of heritage designation⁶, they may in Switzerland take on a far more proactive role both as decision-makers, investors, and developers. Third, some site managers mentioned the occasional mistrust from certain local actors.

“People think we are all about prohibitions, another WWF or *Pro Natura* ... they don’t like being *mise sous curatelle* ... being told what to do with statements such as ‘no, you can’t ski down there anymore’ but we absolutely don’t say that. We still want to be partner of the tourism.” (Jungfrau-Aletsch site manager, personal interview, 2017)

The site manager in Sardona noted the high levels of variation – from active involvement to indifference among surrounding communes in terms of their willingness to engage continuously on World Heritage issues. Social buy-in was not a given and at least two communes had a long history of distance to the World Heritage management. Furthermore, many of the communes involve not only local community members, but a range of other actors.

⁶ In the sense of being excluded from heritage decision-making processes.

“We have not only local people, but also secondary residence owners. They are ten thousand, and they want to decide with the local people, but the (Swiss) Constitution does not allow it. So, we have the problem of how to take them into these whole discussions. We do that now with orientations, we invite the people to come to presentations, when there are not many other political activities.” (Mayor of Flims, personal interview, 2017)

Such engagements also evolved over time. In Lavaux, for example, engagement with local communities and wine producers had initially been minimal, the site manager noted, despite the cultural landscape being that of wine fields.

Involvement has increased since then, through a new association which formalized the allocation of two seats for communes and two for the wine producers. But community engagement is not a one-off action, and in Lavaux it took many meetings and a learning process to get actors to collaborate and the winemakers on board, and to maintain links with local inhabitants.

“We united all the actors related to the site, close by and further away. And then we had some four or five working sessions. Roughly between 25 and 30 participants. Then based on the management plan and the site’s values, we re-oriented work we needed to do at different levels.” (Lavaux site manager, personal interview, 2017)

In Jungfrau-Aletsch, the site manager also stressed the expectations from local authorities to visit and engage with community members.

Linking heritage and local life: local values

Almost half of the respondents said they viewed protecting local values and heritage as a challenge. What this means needs to be explored in more detail. This emphasis on *Nutzung* (use) and local presence came up in several discussions. In Bern, it concerned the sustained presence of local inhabitants, shops, and even government offices within the World Heritage boundaries. The site manager even emphasized how the city-centre residents were one of the best “forms of protection” of its values. “Bern is an inhabited city – it was built for that purpose”, he noted.

The comment demonstrates the subtle links between heritage and local life. In contrast, he questioned new forms of use: a change in commercial profiles with ever more shops selling “low-quality souvenir products” replacing other types of shops, as he put it. World Heritage thus entails interaction with multiple and changing dynamics of local life and different value sets. In Bellinzona, for example, there was an emphasis on a new form of local life associated with the World Heritage site.

“Look at Castel Grande – it has become an urban park. Before its restoration in the 1990s it was inaccessible, now you see people enjoying the area for a picnic, students grabbing a sandwich or going for a walk. It’s like everyday life in a special context. It’s very important.” (Bellinzona site manager, personal interview, 2017)

Yet, there were also more “challenging” local community initiatives, such as locally-supported cable car plans in Jungfrau-Aletsch. In each case, debates around local values and heritage reflected local realities and appeared as a constant management issue. Social sustainability concerns in this sense are at the heart of World Heritage management, and thus also potentially raise the need for further discussions on how to address intangible heritage dimensions in the context of the 2003 Convention for the Safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage (Bideau, 2012).

Tensions between rights and heritage conservation

A common rights issue concerned local rights to development and change. This may occur in connection with certain infrastructure development, housing, or land transformation contexts. There are multiple angles to this question. On the one hand, there are questions about the kinds of development trends in an area and the fate of local communities. Examples include the transformation of rural economies and property rights in sites such as Jungfrau-Aletsch and Lavaux. Whether dealing with complex mountain economies in the former or gentrification and inaccessible property in the latter, such transformations may be more or less directly related to heritage values and initiatives. Yet, they nonetheless deserve explicit attention in a sustainable development approach to World Heritage conservation. On the other hand, there is also the frequent occurrence of development–heritage conservation conflicts, and questions of how local rights are taken into account in the process. At one level, Nimbyist (“not in my backyard”) reactions to heritage conservation measures

appeared to be relevant in certain urban and rural contexts. At another level, questions of how to ensure rights to living heritage and development without reducing these to a matter of material transformation and change were also relevant.

Gentrification and social continuity

While there was generally support for the potential from tourism, concerns were also raised about processes of gentrification (Phillips et al., 2008). This appeared particularly pronounced in the context of Lavaux, where an influx of new inhabitants and real estate projects attracted by the beauty of the landscape has led to significant hikes in property and rental markets, as well as pressures on transforming traditional uses of housing.

“Houses are sold in this village to people from different places bought with money made in another economic context because it’s quiet here, it’s beautiful ... quality of life guaranteed. It’s Switzerland ... when you invest 3, 4, or 5 million in a house you can do what you want ... transform all floors into liveable spaces, change the use of them. The houses are no longer *maisons vigneronnes* with their cellars.” (respondent, personal interview, 2017).

There were clear perceptions among some wine-makers of reduced access to working spaces and loss of facilities through the transformation of house structures into gentrified living facilities.

For the approximately 200 winemakers of the region, this presents specific social challenges such as how to ensure that young people can continue living and producing wine in the region. In several cases rents have tripled over the last few decades, raising urgent social questions: often, youth have no choice but to settle in other towns, at times forced to abandon wine production. Needless to say, this also has direct implications for sustaining the heritage landscape in the long term.

Challenging economic issues: public-private interaction, conflicts between heritage and economic development

The survey results showed that 60% of the respondents saw resolving conflicts between heritage and economic development as a challenge in their area (see table 3). The reported increase in the number of communications between the World Heritage Centre, the Advisory Bodies, and the Swiss Federal authorities also confirm the growing concern about investments and development issues.

Table 3: Survey results on the question “What do you consider to be the most challenging economic development issues in your World Heritage site and its bufferzone?”. Multiple answers were possible.

	number of responses	percentage
Public private interaction	14	35.00
Securing adequate investments in heritage infrastructure	11	27.50
Resolving conflicts between heritage and economic development projects	24	60.00
Stimulating local business and enterprise development in the World Heritage area	8	20.00
Demonstrating the economic value of heritage	18	45.00
Other	3	7.50
N = 45 n = 40 missing = 5		

In practice, several sites indicated management challenges related to infrastructure development projects. In Bellinzona, letters were sent to the World Heritage Centre at UNESCO in Paris about the building of a new train tunnel; in Jungfrau-Aletsch, cable car and hydropower infrastructure projects had a history of NGO contestation and communication with the World Heritage Centre on the question of heritage compatibility. Questioning development initiatives by individuals or communities is common across many sites. It is interesting to examine the different experiences and approaches in dealing with such potential conflicts, and we discuss this further below. This may relate to differences in terms of the nature of the project, e.g. whether it is public or private or its position in respect to the core zone boundaries. A critical question also concerns the specific governance mechanism or regulatory framework used for its protection and management. In Flims (Sardona), for example, national status as a protect-

ed area reportedly informed how impact assessments and mitigative measures were defined in the context of cable car plans.

Valuing heritage, misrepresenting heritage?

Almost half of survey respondents identified the demonstration of economic value of heritage as a challenge. What this means is open to interpretation, at least in part, with two different perspectives apparent. On the one hand, there was a drive in several sites to create wider awareness about the economic, social, and cultural values of the heritage site itself. On the other, there was concern about values being misrepresented, reduced to simple commodities, or diluted by other activities. In Bellinzona, for example, the site manager mentioned a project to valorize the visibility of the castles, reinforcing the contextual values and promoting their historical contents to attract more visitors: “We want to build something serious ... that also tells the stories of the castles, and helps to transmit the Outstanding Universal Values”. Yet, he also spoke of some tensions with private efforts to use and valorize the heritage values in different ways: “During the year there are many requests to organize (private) events in the castle, it’s a very prestigious location”.

This included activities such as the projection of names of companies and logos on the castles. “We don’t want to show everything, but really tell the story of the castles – what they represented in the late middle-ages”, he emphasized. In Lavaux, the site manager listed historical tensions with cantonal authorities that emphasized World Heritage as a tourism promotional tool rather than as a value in itself. In both Lavaux and Bellinzona, site managers stressed the risks of heritage values being misrepresented. Similarly, the Bern site manager raised questions around the nature of the outstanding value if perceived only briefly “from a big bus, stopping in the main road to watch Bern’s Clock Tower (Zytglogge) before leaving again.” Value debates remain central to sustainability reflections in Swiss World Heritage sites (Photo 7).

Reconciling tourism and heritage management

How to reconcile tourism values with heritage management remains a particular concern in the Swiss (and global) context. It was no coincidence that visitor management and sustainability appeared as a priority concern in the survey results. Site managers are often caught between their conservation concerns on the one hand, and cantonal and communal pressures to increase tourist numbers, on the other. In Bellinzona, this included questions of how to balance the current carrying capacity limits, which the site manager estimated at 100,000–150,000 tourists per

year, with the city’s plans to expand the number of tourists to 300,000 annually. In Lavaux, there had been long-standing discussions about whether World Heritage values were merely yet another tourism label and instrument. In Sardona, there were efforts to strengthen tourism development in different forms. In all sites, questions arose on the ability of site management to effectively influence tourism debates and decisions on the topic.

Tourism vs. heritage or win-win?

Tourism, with its up- and downstream industries, is now by far the dominant sector in places such as Jungfrau-Aletsch (Sommer et al. 2010) and Sardona. “Everybody wants to have some tourism, some added value”, said the Sardona site manager in our interview. The push for tourism may come from cantonal or communal authorities, as well as from heritage authorities. In Bellinzona, a common discourse is one of creating visibility and increasing tourism: “we want it to be one of the 10 major attractions of Switzerland”. As the *Gemeindepräsident* in Flims (Sardona) noted in defence of the cable car project, “Because that is the chance for tourism to survive.” He emphasized the importance of marketing: “we need to position ourselves as a UNESCO nature label. And in Flims we face the problem that the site development does not work anymore, because the Casons cable car failed to obtain renewal of its approval to operate ... you can’t go up with it anymore. And now we have a project in place, which is called ‘site development UNESCO’ – we emphasize its name, UNESCO, and we have in the Flims community budget 20 million ... from tax payers for the site development, but the project costs 80 to 100 million.” He also mentioned tourism promotion experiences with *Heidi Tourism* and current considerations to rethink the World Heritage tourism mandate. On the other hand, the push for more tourism also raises concerns about potential impacts on the natural landscape. While emphasis is often on whether the infrastructure itself may affect landscapes or views, questions also relate to issues of visitor management and more. As the Lavaux manager pointed out, “our work is about the management of the site, tourism is important, also in the sense of making sure that tourism is not negative for the balance in the cultural landscape.” Indeed, a major concern in Lavaux concerns falling prices for grapes and the fundamental question of sustaining winemaking as a livelihood and a living landscape. Tourism might increase, but what about the living landscape in the long term? A question which is also relevant in other sites.



Photo 7: Zytglogge Bern © Bern Welcome

Environmental challenges

What kinds of environmental challenges were identified in the survey and the interviews? More than half of the respondents stressed the issue of sustainable visitor and tourism management, roughly a third noted the challenges of mitigating environmental impacts of investments, and another third the integration with wider environmental management (see table 4). Interestingly, roughly half of the respondents stressed sustainable landscape and ecosystem management.

Table 4: Survey results on the question “What are the most challenging environmental conservation issues in your World Heritage site and its bufferzone?”. Multiple answers were possible.

	number of responses	percentage
Building energy efficiency in the heritage area	6	15.00
Mitigating environmental impacts of investments	13	32.50
Building environmentally sustainable visitor and tourism management	22	55.00
Sustainable landscape and ecosystem management	21	52.50
Integration with wider environmental management	13	32.50
Other	2	5.00
N = 45 n = 40 missing = 5		

While energy questions did not receive a high score, the current national Action Plan for Swiss World Heritage (2016–2023) does, for example, underline the tension between solar panel creation and the maintenance of OUV in the old *Quartiere* (areas) of Bern (Confédération Suisse, 2015).

“It’s clear that we won’t carry out insulation works to the exterior of buildings in the old town. That’s clear for everyone. Everyone agrees to that for a 19th century house, for example. Of course, there’s a whole legislative apparatus in place.” (Bern site manager, personal interview, 2017)

While there was a push for energy efficient materials, trade-offs were needed to maintain heritage values (Photo 8). As energy consumption levels significantly determine the size of Switzerland’s ecological footprint,⁷ whether and how energy efficiency can be increased in World Heritage sites is not a trivial issue.

Maintaining landscape, people and values

Several reasons may be considered as to why sustainable landscape and ecosystem management is considered a challenge. In places like Jungfrau-Aletsch, climate-change driven ecosystem change remains a tough nut to crack:

“We have to deal with the changes caused by melting glaciers, such as ‘*Hangrutsch*’ – when the surface becomes unstable as the permafrost thaws and the glacier goes down.” (Jungfrau-Aletsch site manager, personal interview, 2017)

Also, shifts in demography and livelihoods such as that from agriculture to tourism, challenge the maintenance of landscape by agriculture.

“What I know is that many farmers have problems surviving. The work on the land here is physically very challenging. The youth don’t do it anymore. Because it is not lucrative, it’s a lot of work, and it is true, that the whole surface here will become forest again one day.” (Jungfrau-Aletsch site manager, personal interview, 2017)

Site management spoke of how the agricultural area remained the same, yet that employment linked to the land was declining (Photo 9). Also, the landscape was transforming notably through increasing forest coverage compared to the 1970s, for example. This was leading to the search for new solutions for landscape management, including the use of volunteer programmes for land clearing and collective work. The evocative case of Lavaux has already been discussed. There was also clear attention to the challenge of ensuring the centuries-old maintenance of vineyards and wall structures, and the *savoir-faire* this relies upon.

⁷ www.bfs.admin.ch/bfs/en/home/statistics/sustainable-development/ecological-footprint.html



Photo 8: Oldtown Bern © Bern Welcome



Photo 9: Vineyards in Lavaux © Switzerland Tourism – BAFU, Marcus Gyger

“What’s interesting is that – 800 years down the line – we still have winemaking and vineyards. And that the soil still supports it. We have an interaction here between human activity and nature ... so it’s an example of sustainable development, a really interesting one, and that’s the main value of the site. Another important value concerns the history, and how we’re the only region in the world with winemaking families you meet today with traces dating back to the 14th century.” (Lavaux site manager, personal interview, 2017)

Whereas only a fifth of respondents in the survey listed “stimulating local business and enterprise development in the World Heritage area as a challenge”, local economies appeared high on the agenda in Lavaux, Jungfrau-Aletsch, and Sardona. Several efforts were made, in particular by the service sector, to explore initiatives like certification, label schemes, and interaction with tourism-related activities.

“Sustainability is important for us, to make sure there is something left for our children as well. I wouldn’t describe the glacier as sustainable – I imagine it won’t be here anymore in some hundred years, but maybe something different will develop out of it.” (Agricultural Promoter of Valais Prime Food and restaurant manager of the Jungfrau-Aletsch Café, personal interview, 2017)

Efforts included value chains adding extra value to locally produced meat, yet also facing the challenge of marketing and survival in globalized markets.

Addressing environmental complexity

An immediate sub-conclusion concerns the diversity and complexity of environmental issues from energy efficiency to landscape restoration. Such work is integral to everyday management, and there is arguably good potential to strengthen mutual learning. At the same time, there are fundamental questions about the overall ecological footprint of World Heritage site designation and tourism promotion. Interestingly, the potential and level of activity of certain sites in the field of environmental education are important, yet there is a need for more systematic atten-

tion to environmental complexity and exploring the adoption of high safeguard standards beyond the narrow gaze of Outstanding Universal Values.

2. Conditions and experiences with action and cooperation

This section seeks to identify some of the basic conditions for and experiences with sustainability action in Swiss World Heritage sites. Several important lessons stand out. The good news is that much sustainability action is already taking place in many sites. From popular environmental education courses and interactive exhibitions, to site-based research and sophisticated monitoring programs, a number of sustainability concerns “fit” with the strategic focus of certain sites and their management.

In some cases, action can be taken to address sustainability issues; in others, site managers face real constraints in addressing global conditions that are beyond their immediate or sole influence. In the survey, several respondents spoke of their experience with management plans, and the interviews revealed a strong interest in harnessing efforts on sustainability. Managers and communities in Jungfrau-Aletsch recognized climate change as a major sustainability issue, clearly threatening the OUV through melting glaciers, but are not in a position to revert this trend on their own. Still, site management and the visitor centre offered sustainability education, community outreach (*Alpenlernen und Bildung für nachhaltige Entwicklung*), and monitoring of sustainability issues.

It is precisely this action realm between what is done and what can(not) be done on sustainability issues that this section addresses and seeks to clarify. While some respondents described existing frameworks as practical and effective, many site managers stressed the need to improve policy, legal, and financial conditions for the effective mainstreaming of sustainable development. It is notable that conditions vary widely for different sites to begin to fund and implement relevant sustainability action. For many site managers, the highly uneven financial conditions pose real challenges in terms of wider sustainability issues as well as heritage management itself. Whereas natural sites receive additional federal financing, cultural sites appear to be largely dependent upon cantonal and communal finance, with only limited federal support.

Notably, roughly half of respondents consider that more could be done to recognize World Heritage in wider sustainability plans. In that respect, the challenge is both internal (in terms of sustainability action *within* the World Heritage field) and external (in terms of *reaching* out to the wider sustainable development field and incorporating World Heritage concerns).

Sustainability action in Swiss World Heritage sites: novelty or long-standing practice?

While the adoption of the World Heritage Sustainable Development policy for the World Heritage field (UNESCO, 2015) was clearly perceived as news by many interviewed, some of the sites already had a fairly strong sustainability focus on particular social, environmental, and economic aspects. Each site involves specific discussions. In La Chaux-de-Fonds, solar panels were accepted under a permit procedure, just as Bern accepted certain renovations. Site-specific discussions offer an important basis and starting point for building on existing practice when seeking to respond to the new UNESCO policy framework. As with other World Heritage policy and practice documents from the operational guidelines to Advisory Body guidance, there is generally considerable interest in exploring site-based management implications.

Are sustainability action plans in place?

As the following responses reveal (see table 5), roughly half of the respondents did not know whether there was a specific strategy or action plan in place on sustainability. This is not in itself surprising if one considers that many of the respondents were not directly involved in site management. It does, however, indicate the relevance of deepening synergy building among stakeholders.

Table 5: Survey results on the question “Is there a strategy or an action plan regarding sustainability for your World Heritage site?”.

	number of responses	percentage
Yes	12	30.77
No	8	20.51
I don't know	19	48.72
N = 45 n = 39 missing = 6		

Swiss World Heritage site governance issues and their implications for sustainability

Swiss World Heritage sites are no different from other World Heritage sites in that management is largely shaped by national context rather than by international criteria. A key governance question concerns both the vertical articulation between Committee, State Party, and site management as well as horizontal questions of societal integration. The federal system arguably adds a dimension of complexity to this question. In Switzerland, two authorities are responsible for World Heritage at the na-

tional level. The Federal Office of Culture looks after historic monuments, archaeology, and the protection of built landscapes, while the Federal Office for the Environment is in charge of natural sites. This, from the start, establishes quite different legal, financial, and institutional conditions for engaging with sustainability concerns. Adding to this are the varying roles of communal, cantonal, and federal authorities in the respective sites.

Sustainable development: a Constitutional commitment

Sustainable development has been enshrined in the Swiss Constitution since 1999:⁸

Art. 2 Aims (of the Swiss Confederation)

² It shall promote the common welfare, sustainable development, internal cohesion and cultural diversity of the country.

⁴ It is committed to the long-term preservation of natural resources and to a just and peaceful international order.

Art. 54 Foreign relations

² The Confederation shall ensure that the independence of Switzerland and its welfare is safeguarded; it shall in particular assist in the alleviation of need and poverty in the world and promote respect for human rights and democracy, the peaceful co-existence of peoples as well as the conservation of natural resources.

Art. 73 Sustainable development

The Confederation and the Cantons shall endeavour to achieve a balanced and sustainable relationship between nature and its capacity to renew itself and the demands placed on it by the population.

Translating this constitutional commitment into action in the specific World Heritage context is an important task.

Switzerland, in 2015, adopted a World Heritage Action Plan for 2016 to 2023. Covering the two Offices in charge of World Heritage plus the Swiss UNESCO Commission, it was integrated into a decision of the Federal Council, yet its legal significance for the authorities concerned remains unclear. It is noteworthy that the national Action Plan as a whole (objective 7⁹) seeks to assert OUV as a governance principle in territorial management plans by 2023 (Con-

⁸ www.admin.ch/opc/en/classified-compilation/19995395/index.html#a54

⁹ "Objectif 7: La conservation de la valeur universelle exceptionnelle des sites inscrits au patrimoine mondial est reconnue comme principe de l'aménagement du territoire aux niveaux cantonal et communal; ce principe est systématiquement appliqué."

fédération Suisse, 2015). The Action Plan stresses a number of cross-sectoral principles and objectives including sustainable development:

“Switzerland will make an effort to ensure that World Heritage-related sectoral policies (e.g. on biodiversity, landscape management, tourism) coherently take into account sustainable development and respect for human rights.” (Confédération Suisse, 2015)

The Action Plan also mentions that a number of cantonal plans have not yet taken OUV duly into account. This is generally referred to in terms of the lack of explicit cantonal protection measures, but it more fundamentally demonstrates the potential disconnect between cantonal planning and World Heritage. This is important if further linkages are to be built with cantonal and communal sustainable development efforts such as Local Agenda 21 efforts, indicator development, and monitoring)¹⁰. Overall, this governance complexity points to the utility of a more structured reflection about how World Heritage plans can take on board sustainability issues and conversely, how communal, cantonal, and federal sustainable development plans can consider World Heritage issues.

Embedded management 1: where you fit in matters

How and where sites fit into the Swiss system for natural and cultural heritage management has immediate implications for the nature of World Heritage management and ability to engage with sustainable development, given that the backbone of management relies on federal and cantonal protection instruments.

Cultural heritage within the federal system, for example, following the subsidiarity principle and Article 69 of the Constitution, remains a cantonal domain of responsibility (Bideau, 2012), with federal organs having a more consultative status. Natural World Heritage sites in turn involve more federal responsibilities, leading to a much stronger financial situation and opportunities for natural site management and federally-funded sustainable development approaches. This was also reflected in terms of concrete opportunities for addressing sustainability aspects. Several site managers, notably from the cultural heritage field, underlined funding constraints except for some restoration support, raising the question of whether

similar funding mechanisms as for natural sites through the Federal Office for the Environment should be introduced. *How* site management was embedded in cantonal systems was equally significant. In Lavaux, for example, World Heritage site designation had largely been promoted as a tourism label, with some complications over the years in terms of raising other heritage values and management priorities.

Embedded management 2: “We hope we get invited”

Where actual site management is located within communal or cantonal offices, or as a separate set-up, has important and immediate management implications. Site management in Bern was located within a communal service with cantonal competencies, whereas in Lavaux, the communes are in charge of the management plan, having signed an agreement with federal authorities. An additional dimension of management complexity was clear in sites spread out over several cantonal and communal jurisdictions. This led to very different roles, mechanisms, and responsibilities of different agencies and authorities as well as their ability to address relevant development decisions. A common issue concerns the dialogue with political leadership and changing understandings and priorities. This is particularly true and complex in sites covering multiple administrative areas. Jungfrau-Aletsch, for example, involves 23 communes in the cantons of Bern and Valais. Sardona involves the cantons of Glarus, St. Gallen, and Graubünden. Such diversity puts considerable pressure on site managers in terms of renewing and maintaining relationships. It also renders management complex, an issue equally present in transnational sites such as Monte San Giorgio, involving Swiss and Italian cooperation and coordination. In Jungfrau-Aletsch, this took place through the *Stiftungsrat* (foundation board) and an effort by site management to put in place regular meetings, which however was not always easy:

“With 15 on the Valais side, and eight on the Bern side ... everybody works and you can't bring them together each time you want without any problems ... Now we have the system of *Delegierte* and a *Delegiertenversammlung*.” (Jungfrau-Aletsch site manager, personal interview, 2017)

¹⁰ “By the end of 2011, 16 of the 26 cantons had drawn up the corresponding strategies and instruments, or were publishing regular sustainability reports. By the Autumn of 2011, 218 municipalities were running official sustainability processes in accordance with Local Agenda 21.” (Richard and Wachter, 2012).

In some cases, site managers appear to be positioning themselves as observers rather than decision-makers.

“It’s still the local authorities who decide. We aren’t above the local authorities ... If the community says that we have to ameliorate this street and the canton also says yes of course, we won’t come and say: ‘No, that’s no good’. We can’t command it ... It is not our major task to defend or give permission [regarding infrastructure projects] ... other authorities in Switzerland ... do that.” (Jungfrau-Aletsch site manager, personal interview, 2017)

A number of the interviews, for example, pointed to how site managers may at times be “forgotten” by wider development decision-making with potential implications for the OUV. In some cases, site management is not a full-time job, but one of several responsibilities (e.g. Bellinzona or Bern). “We hope we get invited”, was the answer from the site manager of Sardona during our interview about his involvement with relevant decision-makers. The point was that it was far from a given for him to be informed, let alone invited to the table with regards to key development decisions potentially affecting the World Heritage property. It remains a challenge for World Heritage site management units as “additional” institutions to deal with sustainability problems depending on other regional or national decisions (Sommer et al., 2010). Symptomatic of the way management is organized, this left communication channels on World Heritage issues in somewhat of a limbo given its dependence on other institutions.

Actual management of World Heritage sites is often embedded within and relies on other institutional bodies, regulatory measures, and planning instruments rather than instruments driven by World Heritage management itself.

“We are called site managers, but the communes have the responsibility for the area itself ... and that’s where it gets challenging. It’s for that reason that we set up an association including all the actors of the site.” (Lavaux site manager, personal interview, 2017)

Whether expressed by site managers concerned with vertical integration between cantonal, communal and other federal authorities, or involvement in the specific cantonal or communal legal frameworks and management approaches, there appears to be considerable room for strengthening governance arrangements to clarify and solidify the role of World Heritage management within broader governance processes.

Solidity and sustainability of legal and regulatory frameworks

Given the fact that Swiss World Heritage management is largely constructed by, and dependent on, other federal, cantonal, and communal protection instruments, this raises questions about the solidity of such measures. Some have even argued that¹¹ international designations make no real difference. Without necessarily going that far, one may question the solidity of the World Heritage management system, which is constituted by regulatory measures governed under separate frameworks. Thus, for example, legal initiatives seek to revise legislation to enable easier construction and access, raising a potential threat to the OUV management in the long term¹². Another example was the Bern site manager mentioning their work in relation to the *Bauberatung* (construction consultation) in day-to-day operations, yet also underlining the risks of the supportive legal framework being weakened.

The example illustrates the relative presence of an uncertainty factor in terms of how World Heritage values and site management concerns are sustained over time in specific legal and institutional contexts. This factor may, for example, stem from ongoing parliamentary debates and legislative proposals, which indirectly impact on World Heritage management. The quality and criteria of an Environmental Impact Assessment will thus to a large extent depend on the nature of national regulatory requirements rather than the World Heritage policy frameworks per se. The question is also relevant in terms of any broader attempt to mainstream sustainable development in current policy or World Heritage in broader sustainable development plans.

¹¹ “... national or even international factors do not provide a basis for location-specific solutions, as they are often too general, and ... the global label does not ensure sustainability in a designated WHS region; this depends entirely on local and regional dynamics.” Sommer et al, 2010.

¹² www.20min.ch/ro/news/suisse/story/Une-revision-de-la-loi-cible-les-zones-protegees-19622628

The link to sustainable development is not always clear in management priorities

The Swiss World Heritage Action Plan is a good example of a national synthesis emphasizing the need for the creation, or updating, of management tools such as management plans and buffer zone establishment (Confédération Suisse, 2015). Yet, for good reasons – not least that the new World Heritage Sustainable Development policy had not yet been adopted when the plan was elaborated – the linkages to sustainability are not explicitly mentioned. While the term “sustainability” appears in the plan and charter, the action emphasis is mainly on the OUV and the necessary management planning tools. It was also clear from discussions with site managers that the incorporation of a wide range of other sustainability issues was potentially possible, yet nonetheless relied on a variety of other institutional, political, and even financial conditions. Research and knowledge management approaches, for example, vary considerably between long-standing institutionalized collaborative arrangements and monitoring found in Jungfrau-Aletsch, to a more *ad hoc* nature of research and knowledge elsewhere. Also, it needs to be recognized that there are vigorous political debates, using sustainable energy arguments for example, to challenge federal heritage protection mechanisms. This further underlines the importance of a comprehensive approach to World Heritage values and sustainability in the balance of interests between federal and internationally recognized values, cantonal priorities, and development projects from the private sector.

Management planning in progress: routes to more sustainability?

Whereas management planning remains a core priority for World Heritage, site managers were sceptical about the actual potential of such plans to solve long-term issues. Some lamented a lack of practicality in previous plans, but saw current planning as an opportunity to integrate sustainability concerns:

“Values of the site, that’s also a big question now with the new management plan. We have to develop a new management plan now, because the old one is not very useful, it is just for the nomination of the site, but it’s not very useful for daily work.” (Sardona site manager, personal interview, 2017)

Such moments were also opportunities to update management to reflect good practice emerging in relation to international policy. Interesting in this respect are also the different types of agreements established between various stakeholders regarding various management aspects. Bellinzona is one example with evolving agreements with diverse stakeholders.

Another point raised was to use the management plan as a tool to sustain focus faced with the risk of shifting short-term political interests.

“As it changes every four years, well ... the mayor, but also other decision-makers ... there are easily other visions emerging, and the management plan can help in being prepared.” (Bern site manager, personal interview, 2017)

Planning is seen as an opportunity to update practices. Plans may be more or less ambitious on the sustainability front. In Jungfrau Aletsch, the earlier monitoring scheme resulted in 37 indicators to monitor. Recent management planning (finalized in Spring 2018) involves a more focused approach.

Nonetheless, it is also clear that a certain divide may remain between, say, a participatory process promoted in the management planning process, and the actual ability to institutionalize such a process in day-to-day planning instruments (Sommer et al., 2010).

Sardona, again, was one of the last sites to be inscribed before the creation of a buffer zone was required. It is noteworthy that many sites have ongoing management planning processes (e.g. Bellinzona, Bern, and Sardona), or are considering changes, in response to global requirements. There is general support to this, even if some question fundamentally how much management planning approach can resolve.

Buffer zone management as a sustainability tool?

Use of buffer zone delimitation and planning is gaining a certain importance as a management tool in the Swiss World Heritage approach, although there is some uncertainty about its status and location (see below).



Photo 10: Castelgrande © BTR Bellinzonese Alto Ticino

Table 6: Survey results on the question “Is there a clearly delimited bufferzone for your World Heritage site?”.

	number of responses	percentage
Yes	26	65.00
No	5	12.50
I don't know	9	22.50

In several sites, further work is being undertaken in terms of buffer zone delimitation, yet more thinking is potentially relevant in terms of criteria and planning approaches applied. A good example was Sardona, which at the time of designation was one of the last sites to be listed without having defined a buffer zone.

“I think that in a couple of years we have to have a buffer zone. That’s also part of this new management plan, we have to think about all the values around the property as well – within the property but also outside the property – and this is the beginning of a buffer zone.” (Sardona site manager, personal interview, 2017)

What are the issues to consider? On the one hand, the regulatory framework is not always conducive or enabling for coordinated management and a sustainability perspective in the buffer zone.

“We don’t always have the legal means to prevent the construction of buildings that don’t respect the nature of the monument, notably outside the buffer zone where the construction of small villas in places like Monte Bello has taken place independently of a global concept, colour, idea or form. Unfortunately, we don’t have the means to prevent this as it is outside the buffer zone and too far from the castles. The city of Bellinzona should integrate such areas in its territorial management plan.” (Bellinzona site manager, personal interview, 2017)

On the other hand, this also raises the question of criteria and good practices in terms of the kinds of buffer zone approaches being promoted.

Existence of safeguard mechanisms and mitigation measures?

How are the Swiss social and environmental safeguard mechanisms for World Heritage functioning? As implied above, this largely depends on the specific relevance and function of specialized regulatory measures. The field appears to be evolving in part triggered by specific cases such as the emergence of targeted heritage impact assessment practices. This is arguably leading to the emergence of certain distinct World Heritage practices as well. Thus, in the case of Bellinzona, efforts have been made to undertake a specific OUV/heritage impact assessment of the tunnel plans.

“The project comprises the construction of a third rail line next to the existing ones, and a new stop to serve the people including civil servant ... We began by uniting all the actors responsible, the partners involved in the project to form a working group, the CFF, the city of Bellinzona, the canton etc. We also requested the Federal Cultural Office to participate as well as commissioning a study by a group of architects to determine impacts and identify mitigation measures ... if the project moves ahead ...” (Bellinzona site manager, personal interview, 2017)

Such practices point to the emergence of World Heritage-specific safeguarding measures, yet more could be explored in terms of policies to consolidate environmental and social safeguards.

3. Taking the discussion forward: Neuchâtel conference proceedings

In June 2018, the Swiss Ethnological Society and the Swiss UNESCO Commission organized a meeting entitled “Quelles perspectives pour la durabilité dans les sites inscrits au patrimoine mondial en Suisse?” (What are the sustainability perspectives in World Heritage sites in Switzerland?). With funding from the Swiss Academy of Humanities and Social Sciences, the conference took place in the Laténium, Neuchâtel, with national and international participants from a broad range of backgrounds. Its purpose was to stimulate thinking and debate on key sustainable development topics, drawing on recent international policy developments as well as national issues identified in the Swiss context. The presentation of international experiences and policy developments was en-

sured through the participation of representatives from academia, the Advisory Bodies to the World Heritage Convention, as well as representatives from the Swiss and German UNESCO Commissions. On the Swiss side, the conference included representatives from federal agencies, site managers, academia, and others.

The meeting was opened by Nicolas Mathieu, Secretary General of the Swiss UNESCO Commission, who presented the objectives on behalf of the organizers. This was followed by a presentation of the role of UNESCO and the Swiss UNESCO Commission in the context of World Heritage. In addition, participants discussed sustainable development and UNESCO’s role in it, and the challenge of sustainable development in World Heritage sites in Switzerland.

William Logan of Deakin University, Australia, delivered the event’s first keynote, with an international perspective on sustainable development. He underlined recent policy developments, emphasizing in particular the groundbreaking nature of the policy on world heritage and sustainable development adopted in 2015. Describing the different objectives and components of the policy, William Logan ended his presentation by stressing the important role of national implementation and site-level implementation on a wide range of issues such as community participation, public-private partnerships, stakeholder engagement, and public participation.

The ensuing roundtable discussion, moderated by Carlo Ossola of the Swiss UNESCO Commission, involved actors with hands-on involvement with World Heritage at the international level and emerging engagement with sustainable development. Gwenaëlle Bourdin of the international ICOMOS Secretariat stressed the growing importance of sustainable development and pointed out ongoing attention and efforts by the Advisory Bodies. Remco Van Merm of IUCN stressed the centrality of development debates in both the global North and South, referring to recent IUCN reports identifying major threats to natural World Heritage sites, but also to specific development questions emerging in the context of State of Conservation reports. Kerstin Manz of the German UNESCO Commission underlined how sustainable development is emerging as a filter for World Heritage action in general. This is also, she stressed, raising specific questions in the German context on topics such as renewable energy. Pierre Galland of the Swiss UNESCO Commission also spoke on the topic of energy efficiency and the importance of paying adequate attention to both risks and opportunities. He also called for realism in terms of what State Parties are actually able to do and achieve, given multiple constraints faced on the ground. Collective discussions led to insistence on the importance of building capacity and nurturing dialogue on the ground.

The second keynote was delivered by the author of this report, Peter Bille Larsen, then at the the University of Lucerne and now at the University of Geneva. Starting from the overall question about what sustainable development issues are encountered in UNESCO World Heritage sites in Switzerland, the presentation highlighted the growing interest in promoting sustainable development and pointed to the diversity of experiences made. Both challenges and opportunities for strengthening the integration of World Heritage site management and sustainable development were emphasized, as well as the role of the national workshop in shaping a possible roadmap for next steps.

The second roundtable discussion moderated by Stephan Rist of the University of Bern, who is UNESCO Chair on Natural and Cultural Heritage for Sustainable Mountain Development, focused on the challenges and opportunities for implementing sustainable development in Swiss World Heritage sites. Participants included Emmanuel Estoppey, site manager in Lavaux; Daniel Gutscher of the Swiss UNESCO Commission (and president of ICOMOS CH); and Patrizia Bickel of the Jungfrau Bahn (railway). Stephan Rist outlined the importance of conflict management, dealing with sustainable livelihoods, and drawing lessons from concrete experiences. Daniel Gutscher highlighted the growing emphasis on expanding tourism and investment without adequate attention to sustainability concerns. Patrizia Bickel shared a private-sector perspective from Jungfrau-Aletsch, calling for a strengthened *modus operandi* between protection and development with clearer criteria and good practices for working in and around World Heritage sites. Emmanuel Estoppey underlined the importance of different notions of heritage and development, exemplified by how Lavaux is easily misunderstood as a tourism designation without taking into account heritage values. He challenged much tourism as being disconnected from the landscape without bringing real benefits back to the area. Further discussion concerned the importance of ensuring adequate attention to World Heritage matters in policy debates at communal, cantonal, and federal levels.

The second half of the meeting involved group work to open further discussion and brainstorm on key challenges and priorities for future work around the intersection between world heritage and sustainable development.

The following issues were pointed out in the group work:

Group 1

- Integration of the topic during nomination and/or after bottom-up process
- Advantages/limitations
- Problems and challenges of transboundary contexts such as institutional stability
- Engage social media
- Use of existing capacity
- Integrate tangible and intangible heritage
- Niche tourism vs mass tourism
- Strengthen buffer zone management and integration in the wider landscape
- Sites and cities as museum or development
- Reversibility of environmental damage
- Intercultural integration
- Reinforce the status of World Heritage management in legislation
- Integrate the principles of sustainable development in management plans

Group 2

- Allow for social inclusive development
- Capacity building at the local level including sharing of scientific knowledge
- Setting up a platform through the UNESCO CH Commission
- Strengthening instruments and new technologies
- Better integration of World Heritage in planning, strategies, and policies including site management in strategic environmental assessments
- Change management at the site level with better understanding of values and attributes and studies to identify "limits of acceptable change" as a basis for management planning

Group 3

- Strengthening involvement of the local population
- Conflict management
- World Heritage as label or award
- Addressing governance issues such as participation
- Slowing down tourism development (sightseeing vs visiting)

The ensuing plenary discussion and final comments revealed an overwhelming interest in developing a set of next steps and exploring the idea of an action platform

co-hosted by the Swiss UNESCO Commission. Such a platform or alliance could facilitate action at both site and policy levels that would strengthen the integration of World Heritage management and sustainable development in Switzerland. There are immediate windows of opportunity such as on-going processes to rework management plans or local sustainability plans, which could benefit from employing a sustainable development/World Heritage perspective. There are equally good opportunities to engage in international work both bilaterally with

like-minded countries such as Germany as well as supporting the World Heritage Committee, the Advisory Bodies, and the UNESCO Secretariat by spearheading action in the area.

Finally, through the publication of the report and a small film documentary prepared together with Melanie Nielsen of Drumbeat Media, it is our hope the momentum established can be maintained.

Concluding remarks

The very first conclusion here is that sustainable development concerns generally matter to the Swiss World Heritage community both as a value and an agenda for action. There are multiple high-level commitments signifying a drive towards more sustainable Swiss World Heritage. Whereas OUV and its attributes is generally the focus of site management, there are often multiple entry points to address (certain) sustainability concerns.

Secondly, sustainable development concerns are also central at the site level. In places like Lavaux, the social, economic and environmental sustainability of actively producing vineyards and winemakers in the centuries-old cultural landscape are central to sustaining World Heritage values. Yet, across the World Heritage sites visited, it is also clear that site managers face changing and uneven conditions for addressing the full spectrum of sustainable development concerns.

Thirdly, in many places there is a keen interest to promote World Heritage as sites for learning and education in the wider sustainability context. Action opportunities, interestingly, are not limited to the specific heritage sphere, but are often considered relevant in the broader sustainable development context.

Fourthly, a wide range of related sustainable development activities are emerging, from federal legislative initiatives to local level environmental education efforts. A new initiative to boost sustainable development initiatives in Switzerland could arguably benefit from pooling these efforts. Current initiatives are often site-based and fragmented, rather than presenting a systematic effort to render world heritage management and sustainable development compatible in the long-term. New impact assessment approaches are for example emerging, yet remain to be consolidated.

Fifth, the specific governance context raises critical questions about the solidity, and ultimately the sustainability,

of current World Heritage management systems and approaches. This concerns, in particular, the reliance on other heritage protection instruments, which themselves may be under threat potentially eroding the regulatory framework keeping in place World Heritage in Switzerland. As site management is often not a separate administrative body with specific competencies, actual power to influence change is at times limited. More fundamentally, given that World Heritage does not have a strong legal status per se, the balance of interests puts it at risk of not being granted adequate attention and significance.

Finally, Switzerland is also a key player in the international field, notably through support to the Advisory Bodies on topics such as capacity building. Sustainable Development features highly in these discussions, and it would be interesting to explore more systematically how this could be linked with a national effort to boost heritage capacity.

Sustainable development, in conclusion, is, in the context of world heritage management, not a free-floating concept or a luxury. Rather, it offers a framework and potential trigger of central discussions at the heart of World Heritage management in Switzerland. From this survey, a number of areas stand out for further sustainability action on topics such building awareness, visitor management, resolving conflicts between economic development and heritage. A number of survey respondents also call for efforts to:

- Strengthen cooperation between World Heritage sites and Swiss Parks
- Increase funding for all three dimensions of sustainable development
- Address energy installations in site management
- Reinforce the engagement of public authorities in World Heritage management
- Communicate and strengthen the role of site managers
- Invest in education and awareness-raising work



Photo 11: Tectonic Arena Sardona © Switzerland Tourism – BAFU, Gerry Nitsch

Compared to countries keen to boost the inscription of new sites, there are arguably more opportunities for sustainable development in existing sites in the Swiss context (where there are no immediate recommendations for additions to the list). The tourism network and organization *World Heritage Experience Switzerland* has, for example, expressed an interest in engaging further on sustainable development. The survey approach undertaken here is also now being replicated in German World Heritage sites. What then are possible next steps?

Could the national Action Plan be updated to include references to sustainable development? Could sites be incited to review their sustainability concerns in more detail, to put in place and implement sustainable development plans? Could tourism plans include a strong environmental dimension? If the World Heritage community in Switzerland is serious about its stated goals, now is the time to translate policy commitments into practical action. As this report demonstrates, much is already being initiated. Yet, while roughly a third of respondents consider action plans on sustainability to be in place, half of respondents were not aware of such plans. Some 20% even concluded that no sustainability plans were in place. Also, it is clear that site managers face very uneven conditions and pos-

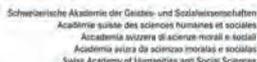
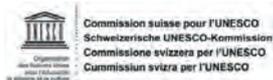
sibilities for mainstreaming sustainable development in their day-to-day management. Such diversity is common in the World Heritage field (and characterizes Switzerland in general). In response, a winemaker and municipal representative in Lavaux stated that:

“We need simple lines of action that are credible and comprehensible, but most of all that can be implemented. We need to make some choices. We cannot work on everything at the same time. Priorities will be needed.” (Personal interview, 2017)

Time is now ripe for such pragmatism in identifying next steps and strengthening collective action.

Annexes

Annex 1: Meeting agenda Workshop in Neuchâtel



Quelles perspectives pour la durabilité dans les sites inscrits au patrimoine mondial en Suisse?

4 juin 2018 / 9h à 16h, Laténium, Hauterive, Neuchâtel

La Commission Suisse pour l'UNESCO et la Société Suisse d'Ethnologie ont le plaisir de vous inviter à la Conférence, qui s'inscrit dans la série de manifestations scientifiques soutenue par l'Académie suisse des sciences humaines et sociales.

Programme

8:30-9:00 Café-croissant-accueil

Mots de bienvenue et d'introduction

9:00 - 9:20 Nicolas Mathieu, Secrétaire général de la Commission suisse pour l'UNESCO

1. Patrimoine mondial et politique de développement durable: la dimension internationale

Keynote 1 la durabilité dans les sites inscrits au patrimoine mondial: une perspective internationale
9:20 - 9:45 William Logan, l'Université de Deakin, Australie

Table ronde 1 Opportunités et défis dans la mise en œuvre de la politique de développement durable du point de vue international.

9:45 - 10.30 Gwenaëlle Bourdin (ICOMOS), Remco Van Merm (UICN), Kerstin Manz (UNESCO DE), Pierre Galland (UNESCO CH), Animé par Carlo Ossola

10:30 - 11:00 Pause-café.

2. Sites inscrits au patrimoine mondiale et le développement durable: défis et opportunités en Suisse

Keynote 2 Questions émergentes et leçons tirées de l'expérience suisse
11:00-11.25 Peter Bille Larsen, Université de Lucerne

Table ronde 2 Défis et opportunités dans la mise en œuvre en Suisse

11:25-12.10 Emmanuel Estoppey (Lavaux), Daniel Gutscher (UNESCO CH), Marc-Antoine Kaeser (Latenium), Patrizia Bickel (Jungfrau Bahn), Moderé par Stephan Rist (UNESCO Chair)

12:10-13.10 Déjeuner

3. Discussions de groupe pour identifier les défis et les opportunités d'action

13.10-14:30 Facilité par les organisateurs

14.30-15:00 Pause-café

4. Présentation des résultats et discussion plénière

15:00-15:30

5. Conclusions, 15.30-16:00

16:00-18:00 Apéro et lancement du livre: *World Heritage and Sustainable Development: New Directions in World Heritage Management.*

References

Bideau F (2012) **Identifying 'living traditions' in Switzerland: Recreating federalism through the application of the UNESCO Convention.** In: Bendix, H, Eggert, A. & Peselmann, A. (eds.) *Heritage Regime and the State.* Göttingen, Göttingen University Press.

Confédération Suisse (2015) **Patrimoine mondial de l'UNESCO: Plan d'action de la Suisse 2016 à 2023.** Bern: Département fédéral de l'intérieur DFI, Office fédéral de la culture OFC, Département fédéral de l'environnement, des transports, de l'énergie et de la communication DETEC, Office fédéral de l'environnement, Département fédéral des affaires étrangères DFAE, Direction politique.

Conseil fédéral suisse (2016) **Stratégie pour le développement durable 2016 –2019.**

Larsen P, Logan W (2018) **World Heritage and Sustainable Development: New Directions in World Heritage Management.** London, Routledge.

Phillips M, Page S, Saratsi E, Tansey K, Moore K (2008) **Diversity, scale and green landscapes in the gentrification process: Traversing ecological and social science perspectives.** *Applied Geography*, 28, 54-76.

Richard C, Wachter D (2012) **Sustainable Development in Switzerland – A Guide.** Bern: Interdepartmental Sustainable Development Committee (ISDC).

Sommer R, Wallner A, Wiesmann U (2010) **Sustainable regional development: Reconciling global and local dynamics and stakes in the Swiss Alps.** In: Hurni H, Wiesmann U (eds.) *Global Change and Sustainable Development: A Synthesis of Regional Experiences from Research Partnerships.* Bern: Perspectives of the Swiss National Centre of Competence in Research (NCCR) North-South, University of Bern, Vol. 5. Bern, Switzerland: Geographica Bernensia.

UNESCO (2015) **Policy for the integration of a sustainable development perspective into the processes of the World Heritage Convention.** Paris.

UNESCO CH (2014) **Charte suisse du patrimoine mondiale.** www.unesco.ch/wp-content/uploads/2017/03/Charte-FR.pdf.

Who are we?

The Swiss Academies of Arts and Sciences link sciences regionally, nationally and internationally. They specifically engage in the fields of early warning and ethics and advocate for an equitable dialogue between science and society.

The Swiss Academies of Arts and Sciences is an association of the four Swiss scientific academies

- Swiss Academy of Sciences (SCNAT)
- Swiss Academy of Medical Sciences (SAMS)
- Swiss Academy of Humanities and Social Sciences (SAHS)
- Swiss Academy of Engineering Sciences (SATW)

as well as the centres of competence

- Centre for Technology Assessment (TA-SWISS)
- Foundation Science et Cité

SCNAT – network of knowledge for the benefit of society

The Swiss Academy of Sciences (SCNAT) and its network of 35 000 experts works at regional, national and international level for the future of science and society. It strengthens the awareness for the sciences as a central pillar of cultural and economic development. The breadth of its support makes it a representative partner for politics. The SCNAT links the sciences, provides expertise, promotes the dialogue between science and society, identifies and evaluates scientific developments and lays the foundation for the next generation of natural scientists. It is part of the association of the Swiss Academies of Arts and Sciences.

